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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3405

December 19, 2006

The Honorable Susan Schwab  
United States Trade Representative  
600 17<sup>th</sup> Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Schwab:

You and other representatives of our government have worked for the past three years to help regain lost export markets for American beef. Ranchers in North Dakota appreciate your efforts, as do I.

Having said that, I am extremely frustrated with recent actions that lead me to believe that the South Korean government has no interest in resuming beef trade with the United States.

When South Korea closed its markets to U.S. beef in December 2003, American cattle producers lost access to their third-largest export market. Our ranchers showed great patience during the long negotiations to resume trade in beef and they were understandably relieved when South Korea finally agreed in September 2006 to resume imports of American beef under limited circumstances.

But that patience has been exhausted as the South Korean government continues to use meritless excuses to block our beef exports. When the first shipment of U.S. beef arrived in South Korea in November, it was held for inspection for nearly a month and then rejected because it reportedly contained a minute fragment of bone. A second shipment was rejected days later for the same reason, as was a third shipment just a few days ago.

The rejection of these three shipments shows that the South Korean government is not interested in abiding by science-based standards in agricultural trade. American beef is the healthiest and safest in the world. Bone fragments have never been considered a material that is at risk of transmitting BSE, and the United States far exceeds all guidelines established by the World Organization for Animal Health for exporting beef from cattle under 30 months of age.

When I talk to ranchers in North Dakota, they ask me why America should continue to accept imports of South Korean automobiles, electronics and other goods if our beef exports are not accepted. I have no good answer for them.

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When the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress convenes, I intend to push for hearings in the Commerce Committee to investigate actions by foreign governments—including South Korea—to unfairly restrict our beef exports. And if it proves necessary to introduce legislation to impose tariffs against countries that reject science-based standards in agricultural trade, I intend to work with my colleagues in the Senate to do just that.

These actions by the South Korean government are a retreat from Korea's stated commitment to open its markets to our beef exports. I urge you to make the successful resolution of this issue a top priority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Byron L. Dorgan", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Byron L. Dorgan  
United State Senator